

Two o'clock, Thursday the 16th inst., we began to transfer a portion of our cargo to the Maitland, and on Saturday the 18th, at half-past eleven, having lightened the Chase so as to enable her to pass over Wilmington Bar, we sailed for Wilmington.

On Sunday, the 19th, at one o'clock, we reached the dock at Wilmington. I immediately requested Dr. Dalton to make a thorough visitation of the hospitals, ascertain the number of returned prisoners needing our services, and also the number of sick and wounded from Generals Sherman's, Schofield's and Terry's commands.

During his absence I waited upon Gen. J. C. Abbott, the Commandant of the Post, to inform him of our arrival and obtain from him facilities for the discharge of our cargo. He took a lively interest in our mission, and sent me to Capt. Lamb, A. Q. M., who furnished a detail of fifty men, and placed at our disposal a large covered wharf, having ready access from the main river street and ample space for the storage of our entire cargo. Having secured these facilities, I went to the distributing rooms of the Commission in the town, and reported our arrival to Mr. Foster, the devoted and over-worked Agent of the Commission in charge of its affairs here. Mr. Foster had issued his last supplies the previous afternoon, and our arrival was, therefore, most opportune. I may mention, as an evidence of the work done by Mr. Foster, in attempting to meet the more pressing wants of the returned prisoners, previously to our arrival, that he had issued, among other supplies, two hundred and forty barrels of milk punch.

Early on Monday morning, March 20th, we began discharging our cargo, and Dr. Dalton returned from his visit of inspection with the report that there were between twelve and thirteen hundred returned prisoners in the warehouses and hospitals of Wilmington, and about twenty-six hundred sick and wounded men from Gen. Sherman's army and from the commands of Gens. Schofield and Terry. The corrected returns, subsequently received, show that there were at that date actually twenty-four hundred and seventy-five (2475) returned prisoners.

Dr. Dalton reported that all these men would need woollen clothing and condensed food, stimulants and esculents, and that the surgeons, including Dr. Buzzell, the ranking medical officer, hailed the advent of the Sanitary Commission with great joy. I refer you to Dr. Dalton's report for information as to the principles which regulated us in estimating the amount of food probably necessary to secure the largest benefit to the sufferers.

The surgeons in charge of the various hospitals began to send in their requisitions at an early hour on Monday morning, and the issues made upon their requisitions were sufficient to clothe and feed every individual in the various hospitals and warehouses, and to secure an ample reserve supply of food and clothing for two or three weeks to come.

In order to aid Mr. Foster in the performance of his duties, I instructed him to secure the services of two clerks, and I also requested Mr. Hoblit, our able Relief Agent, who had accompanied Gen. Sherman from Atlanta to Savannah, to make a regular tour of the hospitals, and urge upon the surgeons the necessity of furnishing the patients as large a quantity of tomato soup made from beef stock, of condensed milk, of chocolate, onions, and farinaceous food, as in their judgment the condition of their patients would require.

I found the surgeons in charge of the various hospitals working to the utmost of their ability in the care of these needy men. Many of them had carried their exertions far beyond the limits of prudence, forgetting themselves in their desire to do good. Many of them were sick, including Dr. Buzzell;* and Dr. Palmer, one of the ablest men in the volunteer corps, had worn himself out and died, while Dr. Jarvis and others who still survived were self-sacrificing in their professional ministrations. My experience here was in keeping with what I have heretofore seen in the conduct of the medical officers in hospitals and on the field, and I think that the people do not yet understand or appreciate what has been done, and what is now doing here and elsewhere every day, by the

* Has since died, a martyr to the cause of humanity.